



Greg A. Foley, Executive Director

KANSAS
State Conservation Commission

Kathleen Sebelius, Governor

MINUTES OF THE STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING

February 13, 2006

1. The State Conservation Commission meeting was called to order by Rod Vorhees, Chairman and Area V Commissioner at 9:00 a.m., Monday, February 13, 2006, at the State Conservation Commission office, Topeka, KS.

2. **ATTENDANCE:** Commissioners and staff present:

Ted Nighswonger, Area I Commissioner
Richard Neville, Area III Commissioner
Rod Vorhees, Area V Commissioner
Dan Devlin, KSU Research & Extension

Andy Larson, Area II Commissioner
John Wunder, Area IV Commissioner
Harold Klaege, USDA, NRCS
David Pope, KDA, DWR (arrived at 10 a.m.)

Matt Scherer, KDA, DWR (left at 10 a.m.)

Greg A. Foley, Executive Director
Scott Carlson, Assistant Director
Don Jones, Water Quality Program Manager
Donna Meader, Program Consultant

Mark Heim, Fiscal Manager
Dee Turner, Conservation District Program Coordinator
Rob Reschke, Riparian and Wetland Program Coordinator
Hakim Saadi, P.E., Watershed & MPSL Program Manager

3. **CERTIFICATION OF ELECTION:**

Motion by Andy Larson to certify the election to the State Conservation Commission for a two year term beginning January 1, 2006 for the following positions:

Ted Nighswonger, Representing Area I, Richard Neville Representing Area III, and Rod Vorhees Representing Area V. Seconded by John Wunder. Motion carried.

4. **ELECTION OF OFFICERS:**

- a. Rod Vorhees was nominated for Chairperson by Ted Nighswonger.

Motion by Andy Larson to cease nominations and to cast a unanimous ballot electing Rod Vorhees as Chairman of the State Conservation Commission. Seconded by Richard Neville. Motion carried. Rod Vorhees was re-elected as the Chairman of the State Conservation Commission.

- b. John Wunder was nominated for Vice-Chairperson by Ted Nighswonger.

Motion by Richard Neville that nominations cease and to cast a unanimous ballot electing John Wunder as Vice-Chairman. Seconded by Andy Larson. Motion carried. John Wunder was re-elected as the Vice-Chairman of the State Conservation Commission.

STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MINUTES

5. ADDITIONS TO APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Motion by Richard Neville to approve the agenda. Seconded by Ted Nighswonger. Motion carried.

6. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:

Motion by Andy Larson to approve the State Conservation Commission meeting minutes of November 21, 2005, as mailed. Seconded by Ted Nighswonger. Motion carried.

7. VISITORS:

None.

8. FINANCIAL REPORT:

The financial report for the period July 1, 2005 through December 31, 2005, was given by Mark Heim. A copy of the financial report is attached.

9. COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- a. Greg Foley reported that the House and the Senate Budget Sub-Committees met last Monday and Tuesday to conduct formal hearings on the SCC budget. The House Sub-Committee plan to take action on the SCC budget 2/13/06 at their 1:15 meeting.
- b. The Senate Ways and Means Committee have not announced when they plan on final Sub-Committee action for the SCC budget.
- c. The House Environment Committee has conducted hearings on HB 2710, which is a revised Irrigation Transition Assistance Program, and HB 2556 that amends Conservation District law to add an additional power and duty to the SCC to facilitate federal programs that acquire perpetual conservation easements for the preservation of farm and ranchlands.

10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- a. Scott Carlson provided an update on the upcoming Commission Spring Workshops.
- b. Greg Foley reported on the Governor's Mined Land Reclamation Award presented to Hunt Midwest Mining, Inc. at the Kansas Aggregate Producer's Association annual meeting held in Overland Park January 13, 2006. The award was presented by Governor Sebelius at the Awards Luncheon. Hunt Midwest Mining reclaimed 52.8 acres at their Lyndon Quarry located in Osage County. The award application will be entered into the competition for the national reclamation award presented by the National Association of State Land Reclamationists at their annual meeting next September.

- c. Greg Foley reviewed the overall mission/purpose of the NRCS Contribution Agreements. A discussion was held concerning the continuation of the Contribution Agreements. NRCS will draft a proposal for Phase II.

Dee Turner provided a summary of the Phase I and II Contribution Agreements between SCC and NRCS, and between SCC and conservation districts. The Clerical Support Quarterly Reports for the 3rd and 4th quarters reflected conservation districts providing clerical assistance on 3,315 EQIP and/or CSP contracts with 2,950.7 hours being reported. The reports received so far for the 1st quarter that ended December 2006, have a total of 1,233 contracts reported with 1,328.3 hours. As soon as the recent requests are processed, \$ 54,632 will have been paid to conservation districts.

- d. Update on Kansas Administrative Rules and Regulation Development:

Scott Carlson reported that the draft revised rules and regulations of the Watershed Dam Construction Program have been approved by the Secretary of Administration and the Attorney General and have been published in the Kansas Register on December 15, 2005. The Joint committee on rules and regulations reviewed and commented on the draft rules and regulations. A public Hearing is set for February 15, 2006. After the hearing we will seek the approval of the revisions of the Department of Administration and the Attorney General. Then we will teleconference with the Commissioners on February 27, 2006 for their concurrence to formally adopt the revised rules and regulations. The final steps consist of filing the regulations with the Secretary of the State and publishing them in the Kansas Register.

Hakim Saadi reported that he has been working primarily with Greg and Scott on revising two sets of rules and regulations: the Watershed Dams Construction Program to include Rehabilitation and the Multipurpose Small Lakes Program to incorporate Lake Restoration/Dredge.

11. NEW BUSINESS:

- a. Scott Carlson reviewed FY 2007 Kansas Water Authority and Governor's budget recommendations.
- b. Scott Carlson and Don Jones discussed possible revisions to the FY 2007 WRCSP and NPS Program. The commissioners approved of a policy for FY 2007 that requires exclusion cages for grazing practices.
- c. The April 1 cancellation and reallocation of FY 2006 WRCSP and NPS Program uncommitted funds was discussed. A decision was made to suspend the reallocation of uncommitted funds and carry these funds forward to FY 2007.
- d. Greg Foley discussed the encumbered cost-share funds procedures of the SCC. The SCC Staff have identified options to reduce the amount of encumbered cost-share funds that are cancelled and lost annually. The commission concurred with a staff recommendation that this issue be discussed at the Spring Workshops.
- f. Motion by Andy Larson to authorize Greg Foley to attend the NACD Legislative Summit in Washington D.C. in April. Seconded by Ted Nighswonger. Motion carried.

- g. Ted Nighswonger moved to review the SCC policy on out of state travel at the next Commission meeting. Seconded by Andy Larson. Motion carried.
- h. Rod Vorhees presented state employee service awards to Donna Meader for 20 years, Rob Reschke and Scott Carlson each for 10 years of service.

12. REPORTS:

- a. Harold Klaege provided the NRCS report. A copy of the report is attached
- b. Dan Devlin provided a report on KSU Extension activities and issues. Dan announced that Dr. John Gillam is the new director of the Research Center at Hays. Dan also announced KSU is working with the Kansas Water Office in scheduling technical meetings to address reservoir sedimentation issues. The Water and the Future of Kansas Conference will be cosponsored by KSU again this year. The date of this year's conference is March 16.
- c. David Pope reported on Division of Water Resources (DWR) activities. David reported the water structures regulations are still in the review process. DWR continues to be very involved in interstate water issues. DWR is monitoring legislation regarding dam inspection and liability issues and supporting a bill requiring inundation mapping on new flood mitigation structures.
- d. Scott Carlson reported on his attendance at the Missouri Association of Conservation Districts Annual Meeting at tan Tara Resort in November and the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Annual meeting in Houston in late January.
- e. Andy Larson reported on his attendance at the NACD meeting in Houston.
- f. Dee Turner mentioned that several SCC staff members have attended conservation district annual meetings.

13. The next regular Commission meeting is scheduled for 9:00 a.m. on Monday April 10, 2006, in Topeka, Kansas.

14. Motion by Ted Nighswonger to adjourn. Seconded by Andy Larson Jr. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 2:08 p.m.

Greg A. Foley
Executive Director

STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION
FY 2006 QUARTERLY FINANCIAL REPORT
JULY 1, 2005 - DECEMBER 31, 2005

PROGRAM/FUND		Appropriation/ Allocation	Total Expenditures	% of Funds Expended	Funds Committed/ Encumbered	% of Committed Funds	Uncommitted Balance
1.	STATE GENERAL FUND						
	a. Office operations (1000)	664,008.85	338,321.01	51.0%	1,250.00	0.2%	324,437.84
	TOTAL - STATE GENERAL FUND	664,008.85	338,321.01	51.0%	1,250.00	0.2%	324,437.84
2.	STATE WATER PLAN FUND						
	a. Water Resources Cost-Share - (1200)						
	(1) CSIMS Cost-Share Assistance	3,493,609.50	845,731.06	24.2%	1,793,695.72	51.3%	854,182.72
	(2) Office Operations	115,130.00	48,114.33	41.8%	5,016.51	4.4%	61,999.16
	(3) Reserve	450,515.43	0.00	0.0%	0.00	0.0%	450,515.43
	Sub-total	4,059,254.93	893,845.39	22.0%	1,798,712.23	44.3%	1,366,697.31
	b. Water Resources TA - TSP Employees - (1205)	259,100.00	83,365.22	32.2%	0.00	0.0%	175,734.78
	c. Non Point Source Pollution Control - (1210)						
	(1) Cost-Share Assistance	2,416,891.00	692,788.66	28.7%	854,082.35	35.3%	870,019.99
	(2) Office Operations	77,986.00	19,527.35	25.0%	2,199.75	2.8%	56,258.90
	(3) Technical Assistance (Conservation District)	530,804.00	418,369.35	78.8%	14,803.00	2.8%	97,631.65
	(4) Reserve	55,636.43	0.00	0.0%	0.00	0.0%	55,636.43
	Sub-total	3,081,317.43	1,130,685.36	36.7%	871,085.10	28.3%	1,079,546.97
	d. Aid to Conservation Districts - (1220)	1,044,000.00	1,027,465.73	98.4%	16,534.27	1.6%	0.00
	e. Watershed Dam Construction - (1240)						
	(1) Cost-Share Assistance - 1240	302,499.00	66,563.51	22.0%	235,935.49	78.0%	0.00
	(2) Watershed Dam Restoration - 1240	750,000.00	0.00	0.0%	0.00	0.0%	750,000.00
	(3) Cost-Share Assistance - 1245	50,000.00	0.00	0.0%	50,000.00	100.0%	0.00
	Sub-total	1,102,499.00	66,563.51	6.0%	285,935.49	25.9%	750,000.00
	f. KS Water Quality Buffer Initiative CSIMS C/S - (1250)	487,203.88	0.00	0.0%	201,720.24	41.4%	285,483.64
	g. Kansas Water Quality Buffer Initiative - (1255)						
	(2) Buffer Initiative Coordinator	35,000.00	8,750.00	25.0%	26,250.00	75.0%	0.00
	(3) Office Operations	5,000.00	4,012.38	80.2%	0.00	0.0%	987.62
	Sub-total	40,000.00	12,762.38	31.9%	26,250.00	65.6%	987.62
	h. Riparian and Wetland Protection - (1260)						
	(1) Demonstration Projects/KWO Projects	192,235.99	12,063.48	6.3%	39,902.75	20.8%	140,269.76
	(2) Office Operations	66,000.00	9,197.77	13.9%	40,023.75	60.6%	16,778.48
	Sub-total	258,235.99	21,261.25	8.2%	79,926.50	31.0%	157,048.24

PROGRAM/FUND		Appropriation/ Allocation	Total Expenditures	% of Funds Expended	Funds Committed/ Encumbered	% of Committed Funds	Uncommitted Balance
	i. MPSL - (1265)	236,333.00	0.00	0.0%	0.00	0.0%	236,333.00
	TOTAL - STATE WATER PLAN FUND	10,567,944.23	3,235,948.84	30.6%	3,280,163.83	31.0%	4,051,831.56
3.	STATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES FUND -1900						
	a. Conservation Easements (1300)	31,250.00	0.00	0.0%	0.00	0.0%	31,250.00
	b. MPSL (1310)	50,000.00	0.00	0.0%	0.00	0.0%	50,000.00
	TOTAL - STATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES FUND	81,250.00	0.00	0.0%	0.00	0.0%	81,250.00

PROGRAM/FUND		Fee Deposit Accounts	Total Expenditures	% of Funds Expended	Funds Committed/ Encumbered	% of Committed Funds	Uncommitted Balance
4.	LAND RECLAMATION FEE FUND - (2542)						
	a. Office Operations	118,003.96	69,284.10	58.7%	1,293.75	1.1%	47,426.11
	b. American Express Credit Card Fund (9453-9400)	2,767.13	91.10	3.3%	0.00	0.0%	2,676.03
	TOTAL - LAND RECLAMATION FEE FUND	120,771.09	69,375.20	57.4%	1,293.75	1.1%	50,102.14
5.	BUFFER PARTICIPATION INCENTIVE FUND KDWP (2517)	150,000.00	144,396.16	96.3%	0.00	0.0%	5,603.84
6.	KWO-RW CSIMS DEMO PROJECTS - (2522)	3,448.46	0.00	0.0%	3,448.46	100.0%	0.00
7.	FEDERAL FUNDS - 3914						
	a. KAWS Projects CSIMS C/S & Oper (EPA) (3620)	2,227.81	700.00	31.4%	0.00	0.0%	1,527.81
	b. KWO - CSIMS C/S & Special Proj (EPA) (3630)	14,400.00	14,400.00	0.0%	0.00	0.0%	0.00
	c. EPA-Wetland Protection (3640)	110,255.56	17,309.46	0.0%	23,402.06	0.0%	69,544.04
	d. EPA-KDHE-KAWS Wetland Protection (3650)	61,686.60	0.00	0.0%	3,757.70	0.0%	57,928.90
	e. EPA2-Wetland Protection (3660)	15,536.17	0.00	0.0%	15,000.00	0.0%	536.17
	f. EPA2-KDHE-KAWS Wetland Protection (3670)	20,000.00	0.00	0.0%	20,000.00	0.0%	0.00
	TOTAL- FEDERAL FUNDS - 3914	224,106.14	32,409.46	14.5%	62,159.76	0.0%	129,536.92
8.	FEDERAL FUNDS - 3915						
	a. EPA-NPS Operations (KDHE) (3730-67400)	94,739.00	16,615.86	17.5%	13,155.00	13.9%	64,968.14
	b. EPA-Buffer Partnership (KDHE) (3730-67600)	21,025.02	(5,223.96)	0.0%	0.00	0.0%	26,248.98
	TOTAL- FEDERAL FUNDS - 3915	115,764.02	11,391.90	9.8%	13,155.00	0.0%	91,217.12

PROGRAM/FUND		Fee Deposit Accounts	Total Expenditures	% of Funds Expended	Funds Committed/ Encumbered	% of Committed Funds	Uncommitted Balance
9.	NRCS CONTRIBUTION AGREEMENT - 3917						
	a. Contribution Agreement Employees, Travel (3800-67320)	78,473.67	83,737.18	106.7%	0.00	0.0%	(5,263.51)
	b. CD Operations and Indirect (3810-67320)	83,211.60	78,935.25	94.9%	0.00	0.0%	4,276.35
	TOTAL- NRCS FUNDS - 3917	161,685.27	162,672.43	100.6%	0.00	0.0%	(987.16)

10.	MOTOR VEHICLE FUND - (6118-6000)	36,173.96	2,691.83	7.4%	0.00	0.0%	33,482.13
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United States Department of Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service

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**NRCS HIGHLIGHTS OF ACTIVITIES
for the
STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION MEETING**

**TOPEKA, KANSAS
FEBRUARY 13, 2006**

PERSONNEL

New Hires: Kristen S. Cuevas, Soil Conservationist, Colby
(previously student trainee)
Julie A. James, Soil Conservationist, Mound City
(previously student trainee)
Jarred C. Kneisel, Soil Conservationist, Washington
(previously student trainee)
Sean P. Kelly, Rangeland Management Specialist, South Hutchinson
(previously student trainee)
Shawn T. Sherraden, Agricultural Engineer, Hutchinson Area Office

Reassignments: Timothy R. Miller, Rangeland Management Specialist, Winfield to
Rangeland Management Specialist, Oskaloosa
Toni M. Wesley, Rangeland Management Specialist, Ness City to
Rangeland Management Specialist, Stockton
Benjamin T. Letourneau, District Conservationist, Oberlin
(from Lewiston, Idaho)
Clinton J. Evans, District Conservationist, Kingman to
Resource Conservationist, State Office Programs Staff, Salina
Kay E. Anderson, Rangeland Management Specialist, Coldwater to
Rangeland Management Specialist, Greensboro, North Carolina

Retirements: Gary M. Begnoche, Agricultural Engineer, Salina State Office
Michael D. Kinsey, District Conservationist, Cimarron

PROGRAMS

Conservation Security Program (CSP)

The Secretary of Agriculture announced the 2006 CSP signup dates. The signup will be open from February 13, 2006, to March 31, 2006. Kansas has one intrastate watershed that will be accepting applications. The watershed is the “Lower South Fork Solomon.” Included in the watershed are parts of Rooks, Osborne, Smith, and Mitchell counties. Kansas also has two shared (interstate) watersheds. A small portion of Republic County

is included in the “Upper Little Blue” Watershed. The majority of this watershed is located in Nebraska. Kansas also shares a watershed with Missouri and Oklahoma. It is the “Spring” Watershed in southeast Kansas. Parts of Crawford and Cherokee counties are located in this watershed. Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation (RUSLE II) templates, CSP benchmark inventories, and CSP tools including the Water Quality Index tools for cropland and rangeland and the grazing assessment tool have been revised and are ready for the February 13 sign-up.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

The funding decision deadline has been moved from March 10 to March 24. This is due to the recent addition of the Contract Completion Incentive (CCI) that will be offered to EQIP applicants.

The new CCI is being offered to give EQIP participants a financial incentive to promptly complete their structural practices in the first or second year of the contract. All structural practices must be completed in the contract to receive the incentive. Contracts must have a minimum \$5,000 financial assistance obligation. CCI incentives offered are:

TABLE A – CCI PAYMENT AMOUNTS

Contract Category	First Year Incentive	Second Year Incentive
NRCS financial assistance obligation on the contract:	Amount to be paid if all structural practices are completed by December 31, 2007	Amount to be paid if all structural practices are completed by December 31, 2008
Less than \$5,000	No CCI	No CCI
\$5,000 - \$9,999	\$300	\$150
\$10,000 - \$14,999	\$500	\$250
\$15,000 - \$24,999	\$800	\$400
\$25,000 - \$49,999	\$1,500	\$750
\$50,000 – \$99,999	\$3,000	\$1,500
\$100,000 or more	\$4,000	\$2,000

A new Energy Conservation Initiative is being implemented in EQIP. Due to the spike in energy costs, NRCS is offering some relief to participants with Fiscal Year (FY) 2004 and earlier contracts. NRCS is offering a one-time opportunity to increase the amount paid for practices affected by energy costs by 15 percent. The eligible practice must be completed between March 1 and June 30, 2006. Eligible practices are as follows:

Table A – Conservation Practices

312	Waste Storage System
313	Waste Storage Facility
317	Composting Facility
359	Waste Treatment Lagoon
382	Fence
410	Grade Stabilization Structure
430	Irrigation Water Conveyance, Pipeline
430DD	Irrigation Water Conveyance
430EE	Irrigation Water Conveyance
430HH	Irrigation Water Conveyance
516	Pipeline
561	Heavy Use Area Protection
587	Structure for Water Control
620	Underground Outlet
634	Manure Transfer
757	Animal Use Area Protection
784	Wastewater and Feedlot Runoff Control System

Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP)

Kansas NRCS received two EWP requests from entities in Shawnee County to repair damaged levees. After site reviews, Kansas NRCS determined that the damaged levees posed an imminent threat to life or property making them eligible for EWP. However, since those reviews, the Corps of Engineers (COE) has committed to fixing the levees thereby eliminating the imminent threat. Therefore, both EWP requests were denied.

Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP)

A FRPP signing ceremony celebrating the first FRPP easement filed in Kansas was held with the Kansas Land Trust (KLT) in Riley County on December 16, 2005. There was an excellent turnout with state legislators, county commissioners, news media, and other interested landowners in attendance. One additional FRPP conservation easement was filed on 387 acres in Butler County in December 2005. An additional easement of 1,120 acres is expected to be filed in Butler County in February 2006. Requests for new FY 2006 FRPP proposals will be issued in the Federal Register in February 2006.

The Fort Riley Military Reservation has submitted a request through their chain of command for Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) funding for purchase of voluntary conservation easements. These easements would maintain the land (immediately adjacent to the base) in agricultural production (farming and ranching) but prevent any development for other than agricultural use. The Army is concerned that encroachment of suburban ranchettes and urban development may limit the full use of the base training facilities at some point in the future. Fort Riley intends to partner with the KLT to hold the easements. The KLT and Fort Riley are hoping to utilize matching dollars (up to 50 percent) under the FRPP program to match the ACUB and landowner contribution.

Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)

In January, Kansas NRCS closed two GRP easements on over 2,000 acres of Flint Hills' grassland in Chase County. This brings total GRP easements in Kansas to 3,800 acres. Another 18,000 acres are expected to be closed in the next several months.

GRP will not be funded in FY 2006, and there will not be a batching period. However, NRCS will continue to accept applications in anticipation that the U.S. Congress will fund the program in future FYs. In the three years (FY 2003 through FY 2005), GRP had been funded, Kansas NRCS used \$7.5 million to approve 75 applications covering nearly 29,000 acres (85 percent easements and the remainder short-term rental agreements).

Watershed Operations

The preliminary design and construction drawings for Lyons Creek Watershed, Site 15 in Morris County, are out for review. The preliminary design is being reviewed by the NRCS design team in Lakewood, Colorado. A local coordination meeting with the landowner and district was held on February 9, 2006.

Construction on Whitewater River Watershed, Site 17 in Harvey County and Site 29 in Butler County, continued throughout the winter. Significant progress has been made. Site 29 is almost complete (97 percent) and will function as a dam if a flood should occur. Most of the concrete work has been completed on Site 17.

The preliminary tree clearing has been completed on Lower Elk River Watershed, Site 20 in Elk County, and North Sector Upper Walnut Watershed, Site 8 in Butler County. Malm Construction began work on North Sector Upper Walnut Watershed, Site 12 in Butler County, and has the core trench completed.

Several construction bids were received to build Lower Elk River Watershed, Site 20 in Elk County, and a contract is being prepared for signatures.

Watershed Planning

The Rapid Watershed Assessment (RWA) process is being evaluated for implementation in Kansas. These assessments include a two phase approach to evaluate eight-digit hydrologic units.

- 1) Resource Profile – summarizes the hydrological unit code (HUC)-8 with existing spatial and tabular data, and
- 2) Resource Profile and Assessment – in addition to the summary this details resource concerns identified by local landowners and resource professionals; and prescribe land treatment systems to address those concerns.

RWAs will provide focus for program delivery for NRCS and will be a valuable tool for other local, state, and federal agencies.

Nationally, NRCS is offering a grant opportunity to perform rapid watershed assessments. This grant is through the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI). The CCPI grant is for NRCS partners to seek federal funding in order to develop and complete one RWA including a resource profile and assessment. Specific information for applying for this grant is available at www.grants.gov. NRCS is also offering each state NRCS the opportunity to compete nationally for additional Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) funds to pilot completion of multiple RWA resource profiles or one complete RWA resource profile and assessment. NRCS in Kansas will be applying for these additional funds.

Watershed Rehabilitation

Sand Creek Watershed, Site 2, Harvey County, received Watershed Rehabilitation funding for planning assistance in 2006. NRCS is currently evaluating the No-Action/Future without Federal Project alternative. Decommissioning and rehabilitating the structure to meet NRCS and state criteria are alternatives to be evaluated. NRCS will also develop a supplemental plan/environmental assessment for this project. The intent of this process is to request implementation funding for the selected alternative.

Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)

Application packages for all the FY 2006 WRP applications were submitted to the state office on January 20, 2006. A new appraisal process will be implemented with these new applications. This will involve considering the value of the land without an easement and a second value of the land with an easement and associated restrictions, but without wetland restoration practices installed. The difference between the before and after values will be the value of the easement offered to the producer. Appraisals for the highest ranked applications will be completed soon. We are continuing work to complete the needed wetland restoration work on a number of existing easements. As of the end of FY 2005, Kansas has 135 WRP contracts covering 12,804 acres.

TECHNOLOGY

Architect and Engineer (A&E) Contracting - Together, three contractors have completed 20 designs since September 2003 and have 19 more designs in progress. Recently, we have issued one task order (project) for stake out, inspection, and check out activities; and we are negotiating the price for three more projects. Electronic Field Office Technical Guide (eFOTG) - NRCS continues to update and automate engineering design tools and worksheets and post them on the eFOTG website. We have posted the following new and updated items:

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- Job Sheet for Diversion (362) - Gradient Diversion Spreadsheet
- Standard for Water Well (642)

The following were added to the Kansas web page under “Technical Resources”:

- Engineering Technical Note KS-1, Design of Stream Barbs
- Engineering Technical Note KS-2, Design of Rock Weirs
- Level Terrace Design Spreadsheet

Since January, letters have been sent to 48 sponsors of dams regarding the hazard classification of 396 dams. While most of these result in no change to the present or the "as designed" classification, the classification of some of the dams has changed. The NRCS rationale support data for the current classification was enclosed with each letter. For some of the dams, the rationale support data included a breach map with the downstream shown. This was a result of all the hazard classification work done in 2005. Since January 1, 12 breach inundation maps have been completed and have about 30 more hazard classification analyses are in progress. Plans are to notify sponsors throughout the year as we complete the hazard classification updates.

In February, reminder letters were sent to 33 sponsors regarding the need to prepare or update an emergency action plan for each of their high hazard dams. Based on NRCS criteria, there are 108 high hazard project dams in Kansas. Database obtained from DWR shows another 5 dams, which were not included in our letters. Our data includes 55 dams that NRCS shows as high hazard classification, but the DWR database indicates are lower hazard classification.

A new cultural resources agreement has been negotiated with the State Historic Preservation Officer. NRCS is waiting on final approval before issuing revised policy. New policy should simplify the issue of those practices that have low potential to affect cultural resources.

OTHER

NRCS had joined several partners in sponsoring the Women Managing the Farm Seminar, February 17-18, 2006, in Wichita. Over the 1-1/2 days of the seminar, attendees will be able attend breakout sessions, go on tours, network, and hear keynote addresses that are designed to support women involved in a farming operation, from the fulltime manager, to the absentee landowner needing a bit of insight about managing their investment. A brochure is attached.

Presentations were made to the Farm Bureau Natural Resources Committee and Kansas Association of Independent Crop Consultants on how to help producers get ready for CSP. Draft soil testing procedure and policy was also reviewed with producers to get feedback. They all approved of the soil testing procedure.

The Kansas Grazing Lands Coalition (KGLC) met with approximately 45 people. The days discussion centered on how the KGLC can work with the other existing grazing groups, improve communication between those groups and agencies and most importantly, determine what rancher needs can be addressed through the KGLC. A follow-up meeting is scheduled for March 14, 2006, to concentrate on action items to meet the needs of Kansas ranchers and forage producers.

Kansas, along with several other states, will be participating in the FY 2006 Conservation Innovation Grants (CIGs) "state component." Information can be obtained by going to the Kansas web site: <http://www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov/>. Deadline for Kansas CIG proposals is April 28, 2006.

Harold L. Klaege, Kansas State Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), announced the availability of \$150,000 for new technology under the CIG in Kansas. CIG, a component of the EQIP, provides farmers and ranchers with the opportunity, through innovation, to address some of the states most pressing natural resource conservation needs.

State, tribal, and local governmental entities, non-governmental organizations, and individuals may apply. Project proposals should demonstrate the use of innovative technologies or approaches to address a natural resource concern. Project results are expected to improve and create the transfer of conservation technologies, management systems, and innovative approaches (such as market-based systems) into NRCS technical manuals, guides, or to the private sector.

Applications are due in the Kansas NRCS State Office by April 28, 2006. Project proposals will be evaluated with the assistance of the Kansas Technical Committee based on the criteria identified in the request for proposal.

Selected applicants may receive grants up to 50 percent of the total project cost, not to exceed \$50,000. Applicants must provide non-federal matching funds for at least 50 percent of the project cost, of which 50 percent may be from in-kind contributions. Projects may be single or multi-year, not to exceed three years.

Other NRCS grant opportunities that are currently available include:

- \$20 million for CIGs, at the national level, for development and adoption of innovative conservation technologies and approaches, in conjunction with agricultural production. Deadline for proposals is March 20, 2006.
- \$9.5 million for Wetlands Reserve Enhancement Program partnership proposals that address wetland creation and enhancement efforts on prior-year enrolled contracts, those where cooperators will contribute significantly to the Wetlands Reserve Program delivery and technical assistance costs, and easement management projects. Deadline for proposals is March 28, 2006.
- \$4 million for the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI) for proposals to control and manage invasive species affecting grazing lands. The GLCI, a partnership of individuals and organizations, maintains and improves the management, productivity, and health of the nation's privately-owned grazing land. Deadline for proposals is April 3, 2006.
- \$4 million for Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI) proposals to help partners identify and solve regional, state, and local natural resources concerns. CCPI offers a "conservation priorities" component that will fund watershed or air-shed planning projects that address terrestrial and freshwater aquatic wildlife habitat, invasive species, livestock nutrient management, minor and specialty crop management, and agricultural air quality. CCPI also offers the new Rapid Watershed Assessments component that the NRCS will use to provide cost-effective watershed assessments quickly to stakeholders and partners. Deadline for proposals is March 7, 2006.